Agency Communications and Decision-Making Structure

Section 1 - Agency Communications and Decision-Making Structure

- There exists an Agency Communications and Decision-Making Structure within the Office of State Public Defender that determines how, where, when, why, and by whom decisions affecting agency operations are made, ensures the process is consistent, predictable, transparent, and accountable, ensures appropriate opportunities for agency stakeholder input and feedback exist, and ensures appropriate communications about these decisions are shared.
- This structure provides the framework for agency operational decision making, documentation, and communications, but does not replace or alter the existing supervision hierarchy within the agency, nor does this structure play any role in client- or matter-level decisions.
- To implement the provisions of this policy, OPD has adopted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which are incorporated by reference into this policy and may be found in OPD's Knowledge Base, which define and document each team, role, process, protocol, and procedure necessary for this structure to function in an effective, predictable, and consistent manner.
- Definitions: The following definitions apply to this policy:
  - "Work Item" may refer to any referral, request, recommendation, idea, suggestion, topic, effort, or issue under the scope of this structure.
  - "Feedback" may refer to any feedback, idea, suggestion, comment, concern, or other information regarding a work item conveyed through this structure.

Section 2- Leadership Team

There exists a Leadership Team within this structure that serves as the primary body guiding and informing agency decisions by ensuring agency managers and supervisors are included in the decision-making process, that decisions have received appropriate feedback, and that feedback received is appropriately considered, as well as by ensuring that effective communications, information sharing, and feedback looping occurs between team members, the Management

Team, and agency employees, and that all team members are provided with relevant, accurate, up-to-date information regarding agency decision-making and operations. Leadership Team feedback shall be available on each work item and visible to all agency employees with access to the work item.

Section 2.1 – Leadership Team Functions: Members of the Leadership Team shall participate in this structure pursuant to the SOPs, which document the procedures, timelines, and mandatory information required for the Leadership Team to effectively participate, share information, and provide feedback to the Management Team.

- **Guiding and informing Agency decision-making**: Each member of the Leadership Team shall guide and inform agency decision-making by, for example:
  - providing their own individual feedback on any work item where feedback is requested or that is presented or discussed in an Agency Workgroup or the Leadership Team; or
  - providing feedback from their perspective and role within the agency on any work item where feedback is requested or that is presented or discussed in an Agency Workgroup or the Leadership Team.
- **Participation in Agency Workgroups:** Each member of the Leadership Team shall participate in Agency Workgroups by:
  - serving as a member of Agency Workgroups, when interested, selected, or as assigned, and actively contribute to the Workgroup's efforts;
  - when selected or assigned, serving as a Workgroup Lead, responsible for coordinating the workgroup's efforts; and,
  - participating in Agency Workshops when interested, selected, or as assigned.
- **Employee Information Sharing and Feedback Looping:** Each member of the Leadership Team shall ensure their employees are informed and able to provide feedback by, for example:
  - ensuring the employees they supervise or manage are informed of all relevant information shared, presented, or discussed in an Agency Workgroup or in the Leadership Team;

- ensuring the employees they supervise or manage are provided meaningful opportunities to provide feedback regarding information or work items shared, presented, or discussed; and
- collecting, compiling, and conveying their employees' feedback to their direct supervisor, an Agency Workgroup, the Leadership Team, and/or the Management Team.

Section 2.2 – Leadership Team Members: All Agency administrators, managers, and supervisors are members of the Leadership Team.

Section 2.3 – Leadership Team Meetings: The Leadership Team shall formally meet once each calendar month, and shall, at a minimum, cover these topics:

- Discussion of on-going work items in planning, design, testing, or feedback;
- Scheduling of Agency Workgroup Meetings and/or Workshops;
- Updates from Workgroup Lead(s) regarding on-going Workgroup Efforts; and
- Leadership Forum, consisting of an open, unstructured discussion among members of the Leadership Team.

Section 3 – Agency Workgroups

There exist Agency Workgroups within this structure, which may be standing workgroups or convened on an ad hoc basis. The Agency Workgroups serve as the primary bodies for the Management Team to obtain feedback regarding the planning, design, or testing of any work items put to the Agency Workgroup. Workgroup feedback shall be available on each work item and visible to all agency employees with access to the work item.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the formation of employee "workgroups" outside this Communications and Decision-Making Structure.

Section 3.1 – Agency Workgroup Functions: Agency Workgroups shall participate in design, testing, and decision-making process, by providing feedback or engaging in relevant discussion on any work items referred to the Workgroup pursuant to the <SOPs>, which document the procedures and mandatory information required for Agency Workgroups to participate and report feedback to the Management Team. Workgroup feedback shall be

available on each work item and visible to all agency employees with access to the work item.

Section 3.2 – Agency Workgroup Members

- **Agency Workgroup Members:** Agency Workgroups are comprised exclusively of individual members of the Leadership Team, and include one Workgroup Lead, selected by the Management Team, and up to six workgroup members, which may opt in, be selected, or be assigned to a workgroup pursuant to the SOPs, which document the procedures and required information to effectively staff an Agency Workgroup.
- **Agency Workgroup Leads**: In addition to ensuring that Agency Workgroups function effectively within this structure, and running Workgroup Meetings and Workshops, Workgroup Leads are also the individuals responsible for ensuring all relevant stakeholder groups are included or considered in the Workgroup discussions, represented in a Workshop, and that the feedback obtained through the Workgroup is appropriate and effective for the scope of the work item(s) considered.

Section 3.3 – Agency Workgroup Meetings and Workshops: Agency Workgroups shall meet pursuant to the SOPs, which document the procedures and required information to effectively manage and run Agency Workgroup Meetings and Workshops.

- **Agency Workgroup Meetings:** Agency Workgroups shall meet pursuant to the SOPs and as scheduled by the Leadership Team and shall, at a minimum, cover the following topics:

  - Discussion of current and forthcoming work items within the Workgroup's scope;
  - Create Workshop agendas and schedule future Workshops; and
  - Discussion of the relevant stakeholder groups that should be included for each work item on a Workshop agenda and determine if additional individuals from the Leadership Team or the agency are necessary to ensure effective and appropriate feedback is received from the Workshop.

- **Agency Workgroup Workshops:** Agency Workgroups shall hold Workshops as requested by the Management Team, Leadership Team, or as determined by the Workgroup, and pursuant to the SOPs, which document the procedures and mandatory information required to effectively run a Workshop, and which, at a minimum, shall require each Workshop to have an agenda of work items and requests as well as a list of individuals attending the workshop, with their respective areas of focus.

Section 4 - Agency Management Team

There exists an Agency Management Team within this structure that serves as the primary decision-making and approval body for agency operational decisions, policies, controls, standards, and other agency wide issues, ensures agency operations are effectively supported by consistent, reliable, predictable, and transparent processes and resources, and ensures appropriate communications about agency operations are provided.

- **Agency Management Team Functions:** The Agency Management Team is responsible for the following:
  - Drafting, editing, approving, reviewing, and managing the following processes, procedures, documentation, and controls:
    - Agency strategic planning;
    - Agency wide program planning;
    - Agency Policies;
    - Agency Internal Controls;
    - Agency Practice Standards;
    - Agency SOPs;
    - Agency training resources; and
    - Agency Administrative Rules (A.R.M.s).
  - Prioritizing all work items, projects, roadmaps, and resources across all agency programs;
  - Identifying intra- and inter-agency opportunities to improve business processes or platforms;
  - Ensuring consistency across agency on business process, use of technology, or other issues affecting agency operations;

- o Ensuring appropriate communications are provided regarding agency decisions, activities, and efforts;
- o Ensuring all actions or decisions made are informed by effective feedback from relevant stakeholders; and
- o Any work item within the Management Team's scope.
- **Agency Management Team Members**
  - o Individuals in following roles are permanent members of the Management Team and shall be documented as Agency Appointments:
    - Director;
    - Director's Executive Assistant;
    - Public Defender Division Administrator (Division 1);
    - Appellate Defender Division Administrator (Division 2);
    - Conflict Defender Division Administrator (Division 3);
    - Central Services Division Administrator (Division 4); and
    - All Central Services Agency-wide program managers.
  - o The following individuals may be appointed to serve a one-year term on the Management Team, which may be renewed at the discretion of the respective Division Administrator, and shall be documented as Agency Appointments during their term:
    - A Regional Public Defender selected by the Division 1 Division Administrator;
    - A staff supervisor selected by the Division 1 Division Administrator;
    - A Managing Attorney selected by the Division 2 Division Administrator; and
    - A Managing Attorney selected by the Division 3 Division Administrator.
  - o Employees of the Development and Operations Bureau shall support the Management Team by providing technical guidance and feedback on work items before the Management Team.
- **Agency Management Team Meetings**
  - o The Management Team shall formally meet twice every calendar month.

- The minutes of each Management Team meeting shall be made available to all Agency employees.
- **Agency Management Team Decision Making Process**
    - **Feedback Review:** To the extent possible and practicable, and prior to acting on any work item, the Management Team shall review and consider all feedback received regarding the work item, and, if existing feedback is determined to be insufficient to effectively decide or act, shall request additional feedback from or through the Leadership Team and/or Agency Workgroups.
    - **Approval Process:** When a formal decision is necessary, the Management Team shall approve work items as follows:
        - The following individuals shall be given an opportunity to approve or reject any work item:
            - Director;
            - Public Defender Division Administrator (Division 1);
            - Appellate Defender Division Administrator (Division 2);
            - Conflict Defender Division Administrator (Division 3); and
            - Central Services Division Administrator (Division 4).
        - A quorum of four voting members must be present to approve any work item, one of whom must be the Director.
        - Any work item that obtains three or more approvals shall be approved, unless overridden by the Director as described below.
        - To the extent possible, each approval, rejection, or override shall contain a brief and concise explanation of the individual's decision.
        - Approvals and explanations shall be available on each work item and visible to all Agency employees with access to the work item.
    - **Director Override**
        - The Director may, in their discretion, override a decision made by the Management Team if the Director has:

- provided the Management Team with written notice of their intent to override a decision together with an explanation of their decision; and,
- provided the Management Team at least 24 hours to provide additional information or support for the Management Team's decision.

- If the Director overrides a decision of the Management Team, the Director must provide all agency employees with written notice together with an explanation of their decision within 24 hours of overriding the Management Team's decision. A Director's Override is not final until this notice and an explanation has been provided to all agency employees.